

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EXCERPTS FROM CBO (U.S. SEA CONTROL STUDY)

REF: STATE 154105

1. BEGIN EXCERPTS:

A. DEFENDING AGAINST SOVIET AIR THREAT

THE POTENTIAL FOR A LAND-BASED CONTRIBUTION IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT WITH RESPECT TO THE DEFENSE OF THE ATLANTIC SEA-LANES AGAINST THE SOVIET BOMBER THREAT. SOVIET AVIATION MIGHT REPRESENT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMMEDIATE POTENTIAL THREAT TO THOSE SEA-LANES. ITS MAJOR ROUTE TO THE
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NORTH ATLANTIC FROM SOVIET BASES WOULD LIKELY SKIRT NORWAY AND CROSS THE GREENLAND-ICELAND-UNITED KINGDOM (G-I-UK) GAP. THE GAP PROVIDES A NATURAL GEOGRAPHIC BARRIER FOR THE EARLY DETECTION AND INTERDICTION OF HOSTILE SOVIET AIRCRAFT. LAND-BASED SYSTEMS, IN NORWAY, BRITAIN AND ICELAND, COULD, AND PRESENTLY DO, PROVIDE SOME EARLY WARNING AND INTERDICTION CAPABILITY AGAINST SOVIET AVIATION. THE PROXIMITY OF

NORWEGIAN AIR BASES TO SOVIET TERRITORY RENDERS THEM VULNERABLE TO SURPRISE ATTACKS AND EVEN SEIZURE, HOWEVER, WHILE U.S. EARLY WARNING AND INTERCEPTOR FORCES IN ICELAND

ARE OBSOLESCEMENT AND PROVIDE LITTLE REAL CAPABILITY AGAINST MODERN SOVIET AIRCRAFT.

THE VULNERABILITY OF ATLANTIC SHIPPING TO SOVIET AIR ATTACK WOULD BE COMPOUNDED BY UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT THE WARNING TIME AVAILABLE TO THE ALLIES BEFORE THE START OF HOSTILITIES. WITH ONLY ABOUT A WEEK'S WARNING, IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY THAT CARRIER-BASED FORCES COULD ARRIVE IN ICELAND IN TIME TO SUPPLEMENT THE SMALL DEFENSE FORCE STATIONED THERE. OTHER FORCES, WHICH MIGHT BE RAPIDLY DEPLOYED FROM THE UNITED STATES, MIGHT HAVE OTHER COMMITMENTS THAT WOULD TAKE PRIORITY OVER REINFORCING THE ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE. IF IT IS INDEED ASSUMED THAT LITTLE STRATEGIC WARNING TIME WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO THE ALLIES BEFORE THE START OF AN ATTACK, THE AIR DEFENSE FORCES DEPLOYED TO ICELAND WOULD HAVE TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF THAT ATTACK ON THEIR OWN. THESE FORCES COULD CONTINUE TO BE LAND-BASED, AS THEY ARE NOW. BOTH THE E-3A AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING AND CONTROL SYSTEM (AWACS) AND A LAND-BASED, EXTENDED-RANGE VERSION OF THE NAVY E-2C EARLY WARNING AIRCRAFT COULD PROVIDE THE REQUIRED TIME DETECTION OF THE APPROACH OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT. MODERN INTERCEPTORS, SUCH AS THE F-14, F-15, F-16, OR EVEN THE

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F-43, COULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE LIMITED CAPABILITY OF THE F-4C SQUADRON PRESENTLY STATIONED IN ICELAND.

THERE IS A SEA-BASED ALTERNATIVE TO REPLACING ICELAND FORCES WITH OTHER LAND-BASED ASSETS. THE NAVY COULD PERMANENTLY DEPLOY AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER TO THE G-I-UK AREA. UNLESS PACIFIC CARRIER FORCES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED, HOWEVER, A NEW CARRIER WOULD HAVE TO BE PROCURED TO SUPPORT THIS ADDITIONAL DEPLOYMENT. THE COST ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCUREMENT OF A CARRIER, ITS AIR WING, AND ASSOCIATED ESCORTS WOULD FAR EXCEED THOSE OF PROCURING LAND-BASED EARLY WARNING AND INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT. INDEED, THE CARRIER OPTION WOULD BE FAR MORE EXPENSIVE EVEN IF CARRIER AND ESCORTS WERE NOT PROCURED.

B. INTERCEPTOR CAPABILITIES

THE U.S. AIR FORCE OPERATES A SQUADRON OF 12 F-4C PHANTOMS FROM KEFLAVIK AIRFIELD IN ICELAND. THESE PLANES ARE RELATIVELY OLD VERSIONS OF THE F-4 DESIGN; THEY HAD USED AN AVERAGE OF 81 PERCENT OF THEIR AIRCRAFT LIFE BY THE END OF 1975, AND WERE, ON THE AVERAGE, 11 YEARS OLD, CONSIDERA-

BLY OLDER THAN MOST OTHER ACTIVE U.S. FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. NEVERTHELESS, THESE PLANES HAVE ONLY RECENTLY REPLACED THE ICELAND F-104 FORCE, WHILE F-4CS ARE, OR HAVE BEEN PHASED

OUT OF OTHER AIR FORCE ACTIVE COMBAT WINGS. THEY DO NO APPEAR TO BE SCHEDULED FOR REPLACEMENT IN THE NEAR TERM. THESE PLANES CARRY OLDER VERSIONS OF THE SPARROW MISSILE SYSTEM, WHOSE TEST RESULTS HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM.

C. EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

THERE IS NO NADGE LINK TO ICELAND. ALTHOUGH THAT COUNTRY DOES HAVE SOME RADAR CAPABILITY, ITS MAJOR LONG-UNCLASSIFIED

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RANGE RADAR WAS DESTROYED BY A STORM IN 1968, AND ITS EARLY WARNING CAPABILITIES PRESENTLY RESIDE PRIMARILY IN THE FLEET OF EC-121S DEPLOYED AT KEFLAVIK AND DESCRIBED BELOW.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM PROVIDE NATO'S AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING CAPABILITY IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC MARITIME SECTOR. THE ROYAL AIR FORCE INCLUDES A SQUADRON OF 12 SHACKLETON AIRCRAFT THAT WERE CONVERTED TO THE AEW ROLE. THESE PLANES ARE NEARING OBSOLESCENCE, AND ARE SCHEDULED FOR REPLACEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE U.S. COMPONENT OF THREE EC-121 EARLY WARNING AIRCRAFT STATIONED IN ICELAND IS EQUALLY IN NEED OF REPLACEMENT. THESE AIRCRAFT HAVE SEEN, ON THE AVERAGE, OVER 21 YEARS OF SERVICE LIFE. THEIR SYSTEMS ARE HARDLY EQUAL TO THE VARIETY OF AIRBORNE THREATS EMBODIED IN THE SOVIET NAVAL AIR FORCE, AND THEIR MEAGER NUMBERS PREVENT FULL-TIME AIRBORNE COVERAGE.

D. CONSEQUENCES OF A SHORT WARNING ATTACK

THE SITUATION COULD BE MOST SERIOUS IF THE SOVIET UNION WERE TO LAUNCH A SHORT WARNING AIR ATTACK ON ICELAND. LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT COULD AVOID DETECTION BY NORWEGIAN RADARS. THERE WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TIME TO DEPLOY A CARRIER TO THE AREA, UNLESS ONE WERE ON PATROL IN THAT VICINITY. SIMILARLY, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ENOUGH EC-121S COULD BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE RESERVE FORCE IN FLORIDA TO ICELAND IN TIME TO PERMIT A FULL-TIME AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING PATROL. ICELAND THUS COULD SUFFER FROM AN AIRBORNE ATTACK WITH SO LITTLE WARNING AS TO PREVENT OPTIMUM USE OF THE LIMITED CAPABILITIES OF THE F-4C SQUADRON. UNCLASSIFIED

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E. RESPONSES TO WARNING INDICATORS OF SOVIET INTENTIONS

GIVEN SOME WARNING OF IMMINENT SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS, THE UNITED STATES COULD DEPLOY ITS RESERVE EC-121S TO

ICELAND TO SUPPLEMENT THE CURRENT FORCE AND PERMIT FULL-TIME PATROL BY AT LEAST ONE AIRCRAFT. WITH SEVERAL WEEKS WARNING, CARRIERS COULD ALSO BE DEPLOYED THERE, AND THE CARRIER-BASED E-2CS COULD SUPPLEMENT THE LIMITED EARLY WARNING CAPABILITIES OF THE OLDER EC-121S.

THE DEPLOYMENT OF CARRIERS WOULD ALSO BOLSTER NATO'S INTERCEPTOR CAPABILITIES. NEWER MODEL F-4S AND F-14S, FLYING ON COMBAT AIR PATROL SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES FROM THE CARRIER, COULD PROVIDE A FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST ONCOMING SOVIET BOMBERS. ADDITIONALLY, AIR FORCE FIGHTERS COULD BE DEPLOYED TO ICELAND TO AUGMENT THE LAND-BASED INTERCEPTOR FORCE.

F. OPTIONS FOR A SHORT WARNING POSTURE

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT U.S. POLITICAL/MILITARY RELATIONS WITH ICELAND HAVE BEEN STRAINED IN RECENT YEARS. INDEED, IN 1973, ICELAND MOVED TO EXPEL U.S. FORCES FROM ITS TERRITORY. RELATIONS IMPROVED SOON AFTER, DUE PRIMARILY TO A CHANGE IN THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT WHICH BROUGHT THE CONSERVATIVES TO POWER. THE 1974 ICELANDIC-U.S. MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT, WHICH PROVIDED FOR A CONTINUED U.S. PRESENCE IN ICELAND, DID, HOWEVER, LIMIT THE TOTAL U.S. FORCE LEVEL THERE AND IMPOSED SEVERE CONSTRAINTS UPON THE STATIONING OF U.S. PERSONNEL OUTSIDE THE KEFLAVIK AREA. THESE CONSTRAINTS, AND THE CONTINUING POSSIBILITY OF DETERIORATION IN U.S.-ICELANDIC POLITICAL RELATIONS, AFFECT THE CHOICES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THE UNITED STATES FOR IMPROVING ITS AIR DEFENSE POSTURE ON THE ISLAND.

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END EXCERPTS.

2. ADDITIONAL POINT YOU MAY WISH TO USE IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC OR OFFICIAL INQUIRIES IS FACT THAT CBO STUDY IS BASED EXCLUSIVELY UPON UNCLASSIFIED SOURCES.

3. COPIES OF STUDY AIRMAILED (INTERNATIONAL) TO
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